

**ABSTRACT**

The present invention leverages iterative transformations of search query strings along with statistics extracted from search query logs *and/or* web data to provide possible 5 alternative spellings for the search query strings. This provides a spell checking means that can be influenced to provide individualized suggestions for each user. By utilizing search query logs, the present invention can account for substrings not found in a lexicon but still acceptable as a search query of interest. This allows a means to provide a higher quality proposal for alternative spellings, beyond the content of the lexicon. One instance 10 of the present invention operates at a substring level by utilizing word unigram *and/or* bigram statistics extracted from query logs combined with an iterative search. This provides substantially better spelling alternatives for a given query than employing only substring matching. Other instances can receive input data from sources other than a search query input.